

The University of Texas at El Paso
Department of Women & Gender Studies
Course Syllabus - WS 3375 Women's Health (Online: asynchronous)
CRN#22676
Spring 2026 (January 20th to May 15th) / Online Course

Instructor: Roshanak Jafari, MD.

Office Hours: Virtual Office Hours:

- Anytime via e-mail or Blackboard Course Discussion Board
- Virtual Meeting Room (by appointment):
<https://us.bbcollab.com/guest/e99ce61775284f62b974750867304b65>
- e-mail: rjafari@utep.edu

Tech support can be reached at <https://www.utep.edu/irp/technologysupport/>

Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to examine topics related to women's health in the U.S. and internationally, specifically the programs, services, and policies that affect women's health. The course content will emphasize the social, economic, environmental, behavioral, and political factors associated with women's health. This course will focus on the impact of various health issues throughout a woman's life cycle, paying attention to the existence of health disparities among certain groups of women.

Course Objectives & Outcomes: By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify the major physical, mental, social, and political issues affecting women's health today (**Confidence, Critical Thinking**)
- Describe the implications of federal and state policies on women's health (**Critical Thinking, Social Responsibility**)
- Examine women's health issues using an intersectional lens, paying attention to the different health needs of sexual/gender and racial/ethnic minority groups (**Critical Thinking, Social Responsibility, Leadership**)
- Explain health disparities and differences that exist among women based on race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, etc. (**Critical Thinking, Social Responsibility**)
- Identify the leading causes of death for women in various phases of the life cycle (**Confidence, Critical Thinking**)

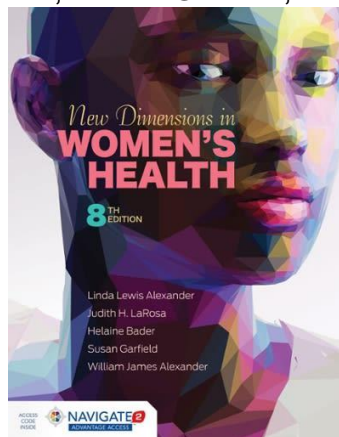
- Critically analyze current medical models of women’s health and compare them to models used in other countries (**Critical Thinking, Global Awareness**)
- Describe how stress, violence, and harassment negatively impact women’s health across the lifespan (**Confidence, Critical Thinking**)
- Engage in experiences and activities that require to create or take part literary and visually in projects and activities that integrates and applies what have been learned (**Critical Thinking, Problem-Solving ,Teamwork**)

Required Readings:

Book: New Dimensions in Women’s Health (Seventh or Eighth Edition) by Linda Lewis Alexander, Judith LaRosa, Helaine Bader, Susan Garfield, William James Alexander.

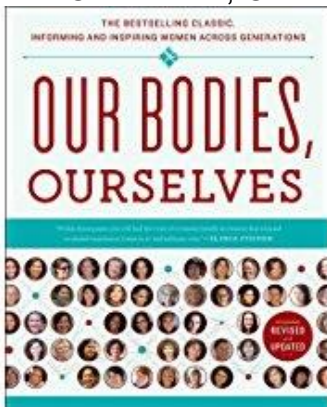


OR



&

Book: Our Bodies, Ourselves by the Boston Women’s Health Book Collective (2011).



Both books are available via the UTEP bookstore <https://www.bkstr.com/texaselpasostore/home/en> and via www.amazon.com

Additional reading assignments and review of videos will be required throughout the course and will be made available to students via Blackboard

Grading and Performance Evaluation:

Grade Distribution – Students can potentially earn **1,000** points in this spring online course based on successful completion of the following assignments:

- 450 points: 9 discussion board posts and responses (50 pts/Discussion)
- 200 Points: 4 Quizzes (50 pts each)
- 100 Points: 4 Essays/Video Analyses (25 pts each)
- 250 Points: Community Project & Paper (broken down into 4 components)

Grading Scale:

1,000 - 900 points	A
899 – 800 points	B
799 – 700 points	C
699 – 600 points	D
599 points or below	F

Assignments to be submitted via Blackboard:

1. Discussion Board: Discussion boards allow you to interact with your classmates as you would in a face-to-face course. They are essential for critical thinking, analysis, and for connecting the ideas in the text with the wider world in this online course. You are expected to participate in the 9 Discussion Questions at the discussion board on week 1,2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13 & 15 as follows:
 - A. You must have one initial post of 300-400 words that makes an original statement and follows all discussion prompt guidelines for that week. You must cite two of the readings (or any other media or outside source) each week to receive full credit. You must use both in-text citations and include your references at the bottom of the post.
 - B. In addition, you must respond to two different classmates' initial postings with a 150-200 minimum word response per post.
 - C. Your *initial* post must be posted each **Wednesday** by midnight Mountain Time.
 - D. Your *follow-up posts to two peers are due each Friday by midnight (MT)*.
 - E. Late initial posts and/or follow-up posts will not be accepted and will not receive credit.
 - F. You should respond to direct questions or issues raised by others in response to your initial post, including those raised by your professor.

2. Quizzes: Pertain to Modules 1-4 and will each be worth 50 points. Quizzes will consist of multiple-choice, true/false questions and will be based on the readings, videos, and discussion posts assigned for that module. Quizzes are open book, and students are expected to work independently. No “group” quiz taking is permitted, as this constitutes plagiarism. Quizzes will be posted on Wednesdays and are to be completed each **Sunday** by midnight (Mountain Time).
3. Essays: Students will submit a total of 4 short reflective essays based on videos presented during each module. Response essays must be a minimum of 2 pages (double-spaced). Detailed instructions will be posted on the link for the corresponding week on Blackboard. Essays will be due **Saturdays** by midnight (Mountain Time).
4. Community Research Project: Students will closely examine one area of women’s health by going into the community to see what services are available. This assignment will be broken down in four sections, each due on **Sundays**: identifying the area you want to study and why (one paragraph); short review of your research on your chosen topic (one page); short summary of your observations of the site and interviews with a local agency/provider (one page); and final summary of findings (5 pages, APA format with citations, double spaced). I will ask you to turn in specific components of the project on given dates, with the **final paper due Sunday, May 3rd, by midnight.**

Policies and Expectations:

Late Work: **No** late work will be accepted during the semester. If you have a question about this policy, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss your concern.

Workload: This is an online course. I expect that you will commit at least 6-9 hours per week to the course assignments. As you prepare for the semester, please schedule your time accordingly so that you can be successful in this course.

Drop Policy: The instructor reserves the right to drop a student for lack of participation and/or lack of work submitted. If at any time a student decides to drop the course, it is the student's responsibility to do so. The deadline for dropping this course is **April 2nd, 2026**. If you drop before the UTEP deadline, you will receive a "W". If you drop yourself or are dropped by the instructor after the deadline, you will receive an "F".

Class participation: Since our contact for this course is primarily online, I strongly recommend that you check the course page on Blackboard **daily**. Email messages are sent to your UTEP email address, so make sure you check your UTEP email several times a week. I will be sending at least two announcements weekly, and these will come to your email address. The class has been structured with individual tasks due on separate days, to allow you time to focus on one task at a time. Thus, initial discussion

posts will be due Wednesdays, discussion post responses will be due on Fridays, essays are due Saturdays, and quizzes and the community research project components are due on Sundays, all by **midnight** (Mountain Time).

Software Requirements:

This course is completely online and interacts continually with UTEP's Blackboard system. You will need the following software to effectively work in this course. In some cases, your computer may already have some of these programs installed:

1. Adobe Acrobat Reader -- to get the program, go to <http://www.adobe.com> and then click on the icon on the center of the screen that says, "Get Adobe Reader". Follow the instructions to install this software.
2. Apple QuickTime Player – go to <http://www.apple.com> and click on the "downloads" tab on the top of the page. Next, click on "QuickTime download" and follow the instructions to install this software.
3. Microsoft Office – I recommend that you install this if you do not currently have it in your computer. As currently enrolled UTEP students, you can install Office 365 and its components for free. You can obtain more information by going to <http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=74266> or ask for help installing it from the UTEP IT Help Desk located on the 3rd floor in the library (915) 747-4357.

Disabled Student Statement:

In Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, if a student needs an accommodation, then the Office of Disabled Student Services located at UTEP needs to be contacted. If you have a condition that may affect your ability to perform successfully in this course, you are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with the instructor and/or the director of the Disabled Student Services. You may call 915.747.5148 for general information about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the rights that you have as a UTEP student with a disability.

Individuals with disabilities have the right to equal access and opportunity. It is the **student's** responsibility to contact the instructor and The Disabled Student Services Office at The University of Texas at El Paso. For more information, contact the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services at <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/>, or you can find them in Room 106 in the East Union Building.

Pregnant and Parenting Students:

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services,

and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Students who become pregnant or have parenting responsibilities may also request reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. The UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) will process requests for accommodations based on a disability, pregnancy, or parenting. Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

A Message from Women's & Gender Studies:

Women's and Gender Studies supports a learning environment in which individual differences are understood, respected, and appreciated. We believe that all students benefit from training and experiences that will help them to learn, lead, and serve in an increasingly diverse society. All members of our program must accept the responsibility to demonstrate civility and respect for the dignity of others. Expressions or actions that disparage a person's race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, gender, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, age, veteran status, or disability are contrary to the mission of our program. All our faculty and staff are responsible for promoting inclusive spaces for all, including students with children and breastfeeding mothers. While a Women's and Gender Studies student, you will be given an equitable opportunity to contribute and succeed. The lived experiences and knowledge that you bring to our courses are considered a resource, strength, and benefit. Thank you for the experiences that you bring to our program!

Policy on Children in Class: It is our belief that if we want to reach all students, that we should also expect parents and children to be present in some form. Currently, the university does not have a formal policy on children in the classroom. The policy described here is thus a reflection of Women's and Gender Studies' commitment to student, staff, and faculty parents. If you are breastfeeding or are the guardian of a child, feel free to bring them to class if there is a gap in childcare. You may sit near the door, and we understand if you must step out occasionally to meet their needs.

Furthermore, I would like to create a learning environment for my students that supports your thoughts, perspectives, and experiences, and honors your identities. To help accomplish this:

- If you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your official UTEP records, please let me know.

- I (like many people) am still in the process of learning about diverse perspectives and identities. If something was said in class (by anyone) that made you feel uncomfortable, please talk to me about it.

Resources:

Academic Writing

For help with writing any assignments for this course, please visit the University Writing Center in person located in the UTEP library Room 227, or online at <http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=57766> For further information on the writing centers services and hours please call (915) 747-5486.

Netiquette

In participating in an online course, it is important that you follow the use of proper online etiquette, also known as “netiquette.” At times, this course will present material on emotionally charged topics. Remember that while you can disagree with another’s viewpoint, you must do so respectfully. The online classroom is not the place for insulting comments, attacks, or venting. Inappropriate behavior can be subject to disciplinary action. Here is an article that explores this idea a little more in-depth: <https://www.utep.edu/extendeduniversity/utepconnect/blog/october-2017/10-rules-of-netiquette-for-students.html>

A link to this article will also be available on Blackboard for your week #1 assignments.

Academic Dishonesty:

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another person's as ones' own. And, collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. Academic dishonesty is an assault upon the basic integrity and meaning of a University. Cheating, plagiarism, and collusion in dishonest activities are serious acts which erode the University's educational and research roles and cheapen the learning experience not only for the perpetrators, but also for the entire community. It is expected that UTEP students will understand and subscribe to the ideal of academic integrity and that they will be willing to bear individual responsibility for their

work. Materials (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill academic requirements must represent a student's own efforts.

AI prohibited

Use of AI technologies or automated tools, particularly generative AI such as ChatGPT or DALL-E, is not allowed for assignments in this class. Each student is expected to use critical and creative thinking skills to complete tasks and not rely on computer-generated ideas. Any direct use of AI-generated materials submitted as your own work will be treated as plagiarism and reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR).

Conduct and Grievances:

The Student Handbook covers the proper procedure for addressing student complaints and expected conduct. If you have a question, problem, or concern with this class, please discuss it with your instructor so that a resolution can be reached quickly.

Each student is responsible for notice of and compliance with the provisions of the [Regents Rules and Regulations](http://www.utsystem.edu/bor/rules.htm), which are available for inspection electronically at <http://www.utsystem.edu/bor/rules.htm>.

This syllabus is a LIVING DOCUMENT. All dates and activities listed may change depending on class discussion and other unforeseen events.

- Readings from the “New Dimension’s in Women’s Health” book are listed in the Syllabus as NDWH.
- Readings from the “Our Bodies Ourselves” book are listed as OBO.
- Readings from other sources and videos are indicated by their titles.

WS 3375 Women’s Health - Weekly Schedule
The course is 15 weeks long, from January 20 to May 10, 2026

Timeframe	Tasks to Complete	Assignment Due Dates	Possible Points
Week 1 1/20 – 1/25 (Module 1) Introduction to Women’s Health	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus • Netiquette article • NDWH Chapter 1 • OBO pgs 758-770 TED Video: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confessions of a bad feminist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Discussion Board Post (due Wednesday) • 2 DB Responses (due Friday) 	DB = 50
Week 2 1/26 - 2/1 (Module 1)	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDWH chapter 2 • OBO chapter 23 • Medicaid expansion in Texas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Discussion Board Post (due Wednesday) • 2 DB Responses (due Friday) 	DB = 50 Essay = 25

Economics of Women's Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthcare access & barriers <p>Video:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am a Girl 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essay re: video #1 (due Saturday) 	
Week 3 2/2 - 2/8 (Module 1) Health Promotion & Disease Prevention	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDWH chapter 3 Intersectionality in Public Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Discussion Board Post (due Wednesday) 2 DB Responses (due Friday) Community Research Project (CRP): initial idea (due Sunday) 	DB = 50 CRP = 50
Week 4 2/9 – 2/15 (Module 2) Sexual Health	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDWH chapter 4 OBO ch. 2 & 4 Sexual, gender minority health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quiz #1 (due Sunday) 	Quiz = 50
Week 5 2/16 – 2/22 (Module 2) Reproductive Health	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDWH chapter 5 OBO ch. 9 & 13 Reproductive rights and adverse birth outcomes Reproductive health surveillance in the U.S.-Mexico border 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Discussion Board Post (due Wednesday) 2 DB Responses (due Friday) 	DB = 50
Week 6 2/23 – 3/1 (Module 2) Pregnancy & Childbirth	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDWH chapter 6 OBO ch. 15 & 16 NYT article (maternal mortality among African Americans) <p>Video (choose one):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sister Every Mother Counts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Discussion Board Post (due Wednesday) 2 DB Responses (due Friday) Essay re: video #2 (due Saturday) 	DB = 50 Essay = 25
Week 7 3/2 – 3/8 (Module 2) Sexually Transmitted Infections	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDWH chapter 7 OBO chapter 11 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Research Project: initial research (due Sunday) 	CRP = 50

Week 8 3/9 – 3/15 (Module 2) Menopause & Hormone Therapy	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDWH chapter 8 • OBO chapter 20 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz #2 (due Sunday) 	Quiz = 50
3/16 – 3/22 Spring Break			
Week 9 3/23 – 3/29 (Module 3) Nutrition, Exercise & Weight Management	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDWH chapter 9 • OBO chapter 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Discussion Board Post (due Wednesday) • 2 DB Responses (due Friday) 	DB = 50
Week 10 3/30 – 4/5 (Module 3) Cardiovascular Disease & Cancer	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDWH chapter 10 • Breast/cervical cancer screening & disability • Diagnostic delays in low-income women Video (choose one): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precious • Girl, Interrupted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Discussion Board Post (due Wednesday) • 2 DB Responses (due Friday) • Essay re: video #3 (due Saturday) 	DB = 50 Essay = 25
Week 11 4/6 – 4/12 (Module 3) Chronic Diseases	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDWH chapter 11 • Fibromyalgia article 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Research Project: interview summary (due Sunday) 	CRP = 50
Week 12 4/13 – 4/19 (Module 3) Mental Health	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDWH chapter 12 • Disparities in postpartum depression care • Barriers to treatment for depression among Latinas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiz #3 (due Sunday) 	Quiz = 50
Week 13 4/20 – 4/26 (Module 4) Substance Abuse	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDWH chapter 13 • Homeless women and substance abuse treatment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Discussion Board Post (due Wednesday) • 2 DB Responses (due Friday) • Essay re: video #4 (due Saturday) 	DB = 50 Essay = 25

	Video (choose one): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Country • Speaking Truth to Power 		
Week 14 4/27– 5/3 (Module 4) Violence/Abuse & Harassment	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDWH chapter 14 • OBO chapter 24 • Not just another woman/Femicide • Attitudes of violence towards women Video: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urgency of Intersectionality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRP <u>Final Paper</u> (due Sunday) 	CRP = 100
Week 15 5/4 – 5/10 (Module 4) Women in the Workforce	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDWH chapter 15 • More caregiving, less working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Discussion Board Post (due Wednesday) • 2 DB Responses (due Friday) • Quiz #4 (due Sunday) 	DB = 50 Quiz = 50

Total points to be earned for semester: 1,000

- Format and reading suggestions obtained from syllabi developed by Naomi Fertman, MPH/MSW, Gina Nunez-Mchiri, PhD, Michelle Stransky, PhD, Wendy Hellerstedt, MPH/PhD & Irma Torres-Catanach, MS